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ABSTRACT

A study, the major product of the Task Force on Instructional Improvement, examined enrollment in, and the design of, master's degree programs in adult education throughout the country. During the study, researchers mailed a project-developed questionnaire to over 100 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada that were believed to have graduate programs in adult education. Of the 64 schools responding to the survey, 61 offered at least one master's degree program in adult education or a related area. Although almost all of these programs were offered within educational units, the schools manifested little agreement concerning program requirements or core courses. Options were available for specialization within the adult education program; however, specialization appeared to occur informally through the students' choice of courses. Programs tended to be small, with 15 or fewer students admitted per year. Enrollment figures for these programs attested to the continuing popularity of adult education as a field of study at the master's level. Of the 65 schools examined, 63 had either recently made or were contemplating making major changes in their programs and in the way programs are evaluated. (Appended to this report are a series of tables analyzing selected program variables by program size.) (MN)

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COMMISSION OF PROFESSORS OF ADULT EDUCATION

Task Force on Instructional Improvement

The major project of the Task Force on Instructional Improvement was a survey of graduate programs in adult education and related disciplines. Committee members were Rosemary Caffarella, Catherine Cameron, Harlan Copeland, Loren Goyen, Richard Orem, and Thomas Sork.

A draft for a questionnaire was prepared by Tom Sork, circulated to committee members, and the final instrument prepared, duplicated, and mailed by Catherine Cameron, courtesy of National College of Education. Questionnaires were sent in September to over 100 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada that were believed to have graduate programs in Adult Education. The following results are based on the data returned by 64 schools, and received by March 1984.

Catherine Cameron, Ph.D.
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SUMMARY OF DATA ON MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS

Sixty-one (95%) of the 64 respondents offered at least one master's degree program in adult education or a related area; fourteen schools had two distinct degree programs. Two programs were offered by units not affiliated with schools or departments of education. Only 15 percent were in departments clearly identifiable as adult education. Descriptions of the master's degrees will be reported in terms of programs (75), rather than schools. Some respondents did not clearly distinguish among their various degree programs. The result is the occasional reporting of data for a master's program that sound as if they are actually for more than one program, or for the doctorate.

Unit Offering Degree	Percent of Programs
Education school or department	27%
Graduate school	24
Other educational divisions	18
Adult education/ACE/vocational technical education	15
Education and graduate school	15
Non-education units	3

Number of programs responding to item = 68

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Other education divisions mentioned included lifelong learning, educational leadership; administrative leadership; administration, higher, and continuing education; continuing and vocational education; colleges of agriculture & home economics and education; and administration, foundations, and secondary education. The most frequently listed degree was a Master of Education, as shown in the breakdown below:

Degree	Percent of Programs
M.Ed.	35%
M.A.	25
M.S.	24
M.A. or M.S. (unspecified)	4
Other	12

Number of programs responding to item = 75

Degree Title	Percent of Programs
Adult Education, AE Administration, AE Leadership	54%
Adult and Continuing Education	11
Human Resource Development	7
Other	27

Number of programs responding to item = 70

Admission requirements generally included grade point average, and a test of intellectual ability. In about a fifth of the programs a bachelor's degree was specified for admission; for most respondents, this was probably assumed. Very few schools required letters of recommendation, writing sample, or a statement of goals. Although some institutions preferred work experience, almost none required it. Interviews were required in a third of the programs; in others these were recommended (40%), and 11 percent made them available at the student's request. Responses are shown below, crosstabulated by degree given.

Admission Requirements	M.A.	M.S.	M.Ed	Un-spec	Other
Grade point average	79%	61%	73%	67%	78%
Letters of recommendation	21	17	12	33	22
Writing sample	0	0	4	33	22
Goals statement	5	6	0	0	0
Tests of intellectual ability	26	44	54	67	33
Work experience	11	11	15	0	22
Bachelor's degree	21	22	23	33	11
Interviews	33	12	16	33	44
Other requirement(s)	16	39	27	67	33

Some of the other responses were options, such as a 3.0 GPA or a GRE score over 1000. A few schools expected evidence for potential in the field, appropriate undergraduate background, or faculty approval. The mean number of requirements for admission was two, and the median was 2.81.

Number of Requirements	Percent of Programs
0	3%
1	32
2	29
3	27
4	7
5	3

Number of programs=75

Admission requirements for foreign students were no different than those for citizens in a third of the programs. The TOEFL exam or an equivalent was required in almost half the cases. A statement guaranteeing financial responsibility was mentioned by some respondents, but is likely to be true for the other U.S. schools as well. A few additional requirements were noted, such as provisional admission, and TOEFL or prior study at an American university. These answers suggested some flexibility in assessing the individual student.

The number of students admitted per year ranged from three to seventy, with between four and fifty-five graduating each year.

NUMBER OF MASTER'S DEGREE STUDENTS BY PERCENT OF PROGRAM

Number of Students	Admitted Annually	Graduated Annually
1 to 10	29%	40%
11 to 15	24	24
16 to 20	9	11
21 to 25	9	8
26 to 30	4	0
Over 30	24	16

The number of credits required for graduation was relatively similar, generally running between 30 to 36 semester hours or 45 to 50 quarter hours.

CREDITS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION BY PERCENT OF PROGRAMS

Semester (N=52)		Quarter (N=19)	
Credits	Percent	Credits	Percent
27-30	31%	44	14%
32-33	35	45	29
36-40	33	48	14
60	2	50-52	21
		54	7
		60	14

Required or core courses ranged from none to 30 semester hours credit. The number of courses required ran from 0 to 8.

REQUIRED COURSES

Credits Required	Schools on Semesters	Schools on Quarters
0	14%	32%
3-6	10	0
8-12	33	5
13-16	17	37
18-21	21	0
24-27	4	11
30 and over	2	16

To get some indication of how the number of required credits related to total credits required for graduation, these variables were cross-tabulated.

CREDITS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION BY CORE COURSE CREDITS

Required Core Credits	Credits for Graduation 27-30	32-33	36-40	44-48	50-60
0	15%	31%	23%	8%	23%
3- 6	0	40	40	[illegible]	20
8-12	27	27	36	[illegible]	9
13-16	19	25	13	25	19
18-21	36	27	36	0	0
24-27	50	0	0	25	25
Over 30	0	0	14	29	57

Respondents were asked what tracks or other opportunities for specialization were offered. Many offered only the basic program; some respondents noted that students could tailor their own programs, in effect, developing their own tracks.

NUMBER OF SPECIALIZED TRACKS AVAILABLE BY PERCENT OF PROGRAMS

Number of Tracks	Percent of Programs
0	43%
1	5
2	12
3	14
4	14
5	2
6	10

Number of programs = 58

Among the tracks cited were adult education administration, adult ed instruction, human resource development, higher education, continuing education, adult basic education,

gerontology, cooperative extension, community college, vocational education, counseling, sociology, instructional development, special education, health, and community services.

The questionnaire asked respondents to list courses required for the degree. The responses were then categorized by general topic. No replies were given in six cases; four programs (5%) had no core requirements. In those 68 programs for which courses were noted, those occurring most commonly were introduction/foundations, adult development/learning, and program development/planning. Few programs required curriculum or seminar/problem courses. About a third of the respondents listed between one and five courses falling into an "other" category.

When asked what courses were strongly recommended but not required, survey respondents listed far fewer courses. Among those 56 programs where such recommendations were made, no single content area appeared more than a quarter of the time.

COURSES REQUIRED OR RECOMMENDED BY PERCENT OF PROGRAM

	Courses			
	Required		Recommended	
	1	2 or more	1	2
Introduction/Foundations	60%	4%	2%	0%
Adult Development/Learning	55	8	5	3
Program Development/Planning	49	6	18	0
Research/Statistics	29	4	9	2
Administration	17	4	17	3
Seminar/Problems	18	1	12	2
Curriculum	11	1	0	0
Methods	26	6	6	0
Other	23	40	15	18

Seventeen programs (24%) had a required sequence in which courses should be taken. In close to half the programs, all courses were offered off-campus; another 21% had at least some off-campus courses.

Requirements for graduation varied, with written comprehensive exams and theses being the most common. Among the "Other" requirements for graduation were attendance at local, state, and national education conferences, and a creative component; several respondents indicated options, such as written comps or extra courses.

Requirement	Percent of Programs
Written comprehensive exam	49%
Thesis	43
Oral comprehensive exam	31
Internship/practicum	27
Residency period	31
Other requirements	12

Over half (56%) of the respondents indicated that there had been program changes in the last two years. Changes included the addition of programs and courses, curriculum revision, institution of higher admission standards, changes in course requirements, move to residential or off-campus or weekend mode for offering courses, program building in specialized areas, addition of certificate programs, administrative restructuring of departments, and the addition of a thesis requirement.

Changes in the next two years were anticipated by 63 percent of the respondents. Changes similar to those listed above were mentioned, plus use of systematic formative evaluation, addition of sixth-year and doctoral programs, clarification of the distinction between M.A. and M.Ed., more recruitment, and better marketing.

An open-ended final question asked for miscellaneous data. Those who chose to comment indicated that most students were parttime, and were working at least parttime while they attended school. Little financial assistance was available, and only a fifth of the programs had any assistantships--usually only one.

Two master tables in the Appendices show cross-tabulations of selected variables by degree awarded, and by size of program (number admitted).

Conclusions

This survey of master's degree programs in adult education showed that almost all programs are offered within education units. In contrast to this near-unanimity, there is only limited agreement on what the core courses should be, or how many should be required. While options are available for specializations within adult education, specialization appears to occur informally through the individual student's choice of courses.

Programs tend to be small, with 15 or fewer students admitted per year. This helps explain why few schools require that core courses be taken in sequence.

Perhaps the most heartening result of the study is the realization that there has been much recent change in program, with even more anticipated in the near future. Adult education at the master's level is clearly alive and well. Continuing popularity of the field is shown by the number of new students

enrolling and the high percentage completing the degree. From the number of programs indicating that major changes have been made or are contemplated, we infer that academic programs have the flexibility to maintain their relevance as societal and student needs change.

APPENDIX

SELECTED VARIABLES BY SIZE OF PROGRAM

Variable	Program Size					
	1-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	30+
Number of grads						
0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
1-10	100	44	29	0	0	0
11-15	0	55	71	29	0	6
16/20	0	0	0	43	33	22
21-25	0	0	0	29	67	11
Over 30	0	0	0	0	0	56
Program						
M.A.	14	37	14	14	67	28
M.S.	32	17	29	29	0	22
M.Ed	50	19	29	29	0	33
Unspec.	0	0	14	14	0	6
Other	5	33	14	14	33	11
No. of tracks						
0	67	27	43	0	100	28
1	6	0	29	0	0	0
2	11	7	0	25	0	27
3	11	13	0	0	0	36
4	6	27	29	25	0	0
5	0	0	0	25	0	0
6	0	27	0	25	0	9

SELECTED VARIABLES BY SIZE OF PROGRAM (cont.)

Variable	Program Size					
	1-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	30+
Courses offered off-campus						
All	36	53	20	50	0	13
Some	41	29	80	17	67	67
None	23	18	0	33	33	20
Graduation requirements						
Oral exams	36	28	28	17	33	33
Thesis	50	44	29	17	67	44
Residency	23	39	57	33	67	17
Internship	32	33	14	0	0	0
Other reqs.	5	22	0	33	0	11
Sequence of courses						
Yes	9	28	43	40	33	27
No	91	72	57	60	67	73
Credits required						
SEMESTER						
27-30	35	43	40	20	0	11
32-33	41	21	20	20	50	56
36-40	18	36	40	60	50	33
50-60	6	0	0	0	0	0
QUARTER						
32-33	40	0	0	0	0	0
44-48	20	100	0	50	100	57
50-60	40	0	100	50	0	43
Changes						
Made	32	67	71	50	67	73
Anticipated	32	61	100	100	67	79

SELECTED VARIABLES BY TYPE OF DEGREE

Variable	M.A. (N=19)	M.S. (N=18)	M.Ed (N=26)	Unspec (N=3)	Other (N=9)
Unit					
Adult education	6%	24%	17%	0%	11%
Education	13	18	38	0	44
Graduate education	25	24	8	0	0
Other	13	24	13	100	11
Graduate	44	6	25	0	22
Non-education	0	6	0	0	11
Program name					
Adult education	61	44	56	67	50
ACE	11	19	8	0	13
HRD	11	0	8	33	0
Other programs	17	38	28	0	38
Admission of foreign students					
No difference	11	29	40	33	67
TOEFL or equiv.	56	53	44	33	33
TOEFL & other	11	6	4	0	0
Other reqs.	22	12	12	33	0
Number of tracks					
0	60	43	42	0	29
1	0	14	5	0	0
2	0	7	21	0	29
3	13	7	16	33	14
4	13	14	16	33	0
5	0	0	0	33	0
6	13	14	0	0	29
Required courses					
Administration					
1 course	32	28	27	33	0
2 courses	0	6	4	0	11
Curriculum					
1 course	26	22	23	0	0
2 courses	0	0	4	0	0
Introduction					
1 course	63	78	70	33	56
2 courses	5	6	0	33	0
Adult development & learning					
1 course	68	72	54	67	56
2 courses	0	17	7	0	0
Programming					
1 course	63	67	50	33	56
2 courses	0	6	8	0	0
3 courses	0	0	0	0	11

SELECTED VARIABLES BY TYPE OF DEGREE (cont.)

Variable	M.A. (N=19)	M.S. (N=18)	M.Ed. (N=26)	Unspec. (N=3)	Other (N=9)
Research					
1 course	47	28	42	33	22
2 courses	11	0	4	0	0
Seminar					
1 course	27	17	31	67	22
2 courses	0	6	0	0	0
Methods					
1 course	26	39	39	67	22
2 courses	5	6	4	0	11
Other courses	63	50	46	67	22
Recommended courses					
Administration					
1 course	37	44	42	0	44
2 courses	0	6	0	0	11
Curriculum	26	33	23	0	22
Introduction					
1 course	26	33	23	0	22
2 courses	5	0	0	0	0
Adult development & learning					
1 course	32	33	27	0	33
2 courses	5	0	4	0	0
Methods	37	39	27	0	22
Programming	42	50	39	0	44
Research					
1 course	26	61	27	0	22
2 courses	5	0	0	0	0
Seminar					
1 course	32	50	35	0	33
2 courses	0	0	4	0	0
Other	58	50	50	33	78
Sequence					
Yes	24	35	17	33	22
No	77	65	83	67	78
Courses offered off-campus					
All	44	53	40	67	44
Some	13	27	28	0	11
None	44	20	32	33	44

SELECTED VARIABLES BY TYPE OF DEGREE (cont.)

Variable	M.A. (N=19)	M.S. (N=18)	M.Ed. (N=26)	Unspec. (N=3)	Other (N=9)
Graduation requirements					
Written exams	42	44	65	67	22
Oral exams	21	28	35	0	56
Thesis	58	39	31	0	67
Residency	42	28	31	0	22
Internship	26	28	27	33	22
Other reqs.	5	17	12	0	22
Changes					
Made	78	56	44	33	55
Anticipated	56	75	56	100	63

Evanston, Illinois
April 24, 1984